

URBAN CHARACTER

Downtown Los Alamos should be a relatively higher density and more compact place than it is now and defined by a boundary to protect the surrounding neighborhoods. It should be "park once, pedestrian first" to allow for the redevelopment of selected surface parking lots into mixed-use, two to four story buildings. There will be a need to introduce more streets into the fabric of downtown so as to be more pedestrian friendly and create more opportunity for development. The goal is to make downtown Los Alamos a 16-hour town center and a place with more housing, set amidst and connected to the most beautiful natural setting in the country.

- Action Required*
1. Charrette Planning Process: Determine the overall plan needed to implement this strategy, encouraging maximum citizen input. A charrette or charrettes should focus on mixed-use development opportunities within the downtown (residential on top of retail, office on top of retail, live/work, etc.), should aim to accommodate people with a mix of different incomes qualified to buy or rent housing and should determine multiple sites for the focus of commercial development in downtown.
 2. Master Plan and Zoning Adoption: Create and present to the Planning and Zoning Commission and County Council a master plan and zoning for downtown that would encourage the implementation of the results of the charrette. This new master plan would be based upon the results of the charrette.

MIXED INCOME HOUSING

Encourage mixed-income housing in the downtown, primarily higher density attached product. Smaller units mixed in with larger units would help encourage a variety of incomes living in close proximity to one another. Coordinating with LANL and the public schools would both help solve the housing problems their employees and temporary workers have as well as allow for more affordable housing. The provision of Day care and the design of live/work units would be part of this strategy.

- Action Required*
1. LANL and School District Housing Program: Develop a financial and mortgage program to lower the cost of home ownership, following the models employed at numerous universities throughout the country.
 2. Mixed Income Downtown Housing Program: Develop a financial and mortgage program appropriate to mixed income, mixed use housing in the central business district.

EXPORT EMPLOYMENT

Focus the economic development efforts toward high tech sectors coming out of the labs and encouraging LANL to expand their presence in the downtown. Increase the investment in quality of life projects, such as skiing, parks, access to nature, etc., to both improve the attractiveness of Los Alamos to these export businesses but for tourism, recognizing that tourism will be a by-product of this strategy, not the main focus.

- Action Required*
1. Study possible office and research LANL uses that could be in the downtown. Factors involved with this analysis include security, proximity/compatibility with other uses, quality of life, economic development, quality and availability of space, etc. Determine how the County and School District may be able to finance/build a LANL "work center" while maintaining and improving revenue stream to the Schools.
 2. Explore how to ensure that state of the art information networking capability will be in place, relying on the wide-band study that is currently nearing completion.
 3. Determine how to expand the current incubator in the downtown with retail on the first floor and the incubator space on the top floors as a model mixed use project.
 4. Explore tie-ins with Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Espanola and Pojoaque regarding economic development and tourism.

REGIONAL SERVING EMPLOYMENT

Encourage the location of regional serving businesses in the downtown, particularly serving LANL and DOE, such as catering, travel, printing, consulting, etc. This may mean the outsourcing of services presently being done by the LANL and DOE.

- Action Required*
1. Identify those services that LANL and DOE must go outside Los Alamos to find providers of or those that are currently done in-house within the Labs. Determine if the out-of-town providers would locate in Los Alamos or determine if an independent provider could be encouraged to open a new business in downtown Los Alamos.

REGIONAL-ORIENTED RETAIL

Determine if regional-serving retailing and entertainment retailing could be recruited and encouraged to locate in a pedestrian friendly location. This would be addressed in the charrette process.

- Action Required*
1. Identify strategies and requirements to make the Downtown a "destination" for retail and commercial service seekers and a "location" for service providers, with consideration for e-commerce opportunities.

CULTURAL / CIVIC

Tie-in with Santa Fe and Albuquerque regarding cultural attractions and events that could be held in downtown Los Alamos. Create a seasonal cultural attraction for the residents and possibly visitors that would attract people to downtown. Expand upon the civic center concentration around Ashley Pond and consider an effort to make Los Alamos "Science City USA".

- Action Required*
1. Identify the cultural attractions that are currently in Santa Fe and Albuquerque that would appeal to Los Alamos residents and determine what it would take to get these attractions up the hill, adding to the current cultural offerings. This was referred to as the "cultural software."
 2. Determine the size, program and financing options for a multi-purpose performance/conference/distance learning center. This was referred to as the "cultural hardware."
 3. Summarize the existing work completed for the expansion of the government center as well as determine further expansion opportunities.
 4. Outline the "Science City, USA" proposal and possible size, program and financing alternatives if buildings are involved.

HISTORIC

- Maintain and expand upon the integrity of the historic district.
- Action Required*
1. Develop a Master Plan for the Historic District.

MOVIES

- Work with Trans-Lux to determine what would be required to expand/rehabilitate the movie theaters in Los Alamos.
- Action Required*
1. Package the movie market analysis and present to Trans-Lux. Determine their interest in participating in the urban entertainment district.

NATURE

- During the charrette process, identify the connections to nature by way of trails (bike and walking). Determine if there is a need for another park in the downtown, particularly if it may act as a focal point for the retail.
- Action Required*
1. As input to the charrette, determine the connections to nature, the need and location for another downtown park, the desire for additional trees in the downtown, the proposed natural history center and the role of sustainable development.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- Set up a downtown/LANL circulator system that runs at least every five minutes and that is free to link different parts of downtown and the Labs. In addition, create a community-wide transit system to connect the downtown to the neighborhoods, White Rock and the valley.
- Action Required*
1. Determine the route of the circulator and the community-wide system and understand the various federal, state and local funding devices available to assist paying for such a system.

PARKING / TRAFFIC

- Implement a "park once/pedestrian first" policy and determine the implications of such a policy. Broadly assess the key traffic issues facing downtown.
- Action Required*
1. Determine the finding mechanisms available for various parking solutions.
 2. Identify the downtown traffic issues and options for dealing with them.

BUILDING REGULATORY REFORM

- Put in place development codes that will encourage pedestrian oriented, mixed-use projects.
- Action Required*
1. Determine how the existing development codes need to change to allow for pedestrian oriented, mixed-use projects. Review the experience of downtown Albuquerque.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

- Encourage the maximum citizen involvement in the charrette and other planning processes. With all communications, re-emphasize the history and participants in the strategy process for continuity and credibility.
- Action Required*
1. Develop a comprehensive plan (newspaper, web site, meetings, etc.) to feedback the results of the strategy process and prepare the citizens for the charrette. Include all aspects of the community as well as commuters in this plan.

NON-PROFIT IMPLEMENTATION ORGANIZATION

- Create or set up a non-profit development organization empowered to assemble land, work with the County, obtain County investments in land, engage in for-profit joint ventures with building developers, potentially create a business improvement district, organize festivals, and in general, implement this strategy to the maximum degree.
- Action Required*
1. Determine the initial scope of work of the non-profit in priority and determine the initial funding sources.



A. INTRODUCTION

2. THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

FOR THE SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THE MASTER PLAN DESIGN CHARRETTE, THE TEAM INVESTIGATED the existing conditions, interviewed business owners, county officials, LANL representatives, and others as well as held a series of six public meetings with various interests groups composed of Los Alamos residents. These six groups were:

1. Arts, Education, Youth and Entertainment
2. Small Business Concerns
3. Housing Issues
4. Senior Issues
5. Sustainability
6. Transportation Issues

There was a great deal of overlap and agreement among participants in these groups, giving support to the idea that a vital Downtown must combine the interests and concerns of most residents of Los Alamos. These forums produced the direction and background materials for the Main Street Futures Committee to develop in an open, participatory planning process, the redevelopment strategy described in detail on the facing page.

The Main Street Futures Committee was composed of representatives of decision makers within the community and helped to create a program for action that directed the design process during the charrette and a series of steps that must be taken to intelligently implement the Master Plan following the charrette. Some of these actions are to be undertaken by the County, others will be by private interests, still others by non-profit downtown organizations.

The strategies, separately and together, are both a guide for the design of the new Downtown as well as a set of priorities and criteria for evaluating the specifics of the proposed individual public and private initiatives and projects.

A five-day design charrette on this project took place in Los Alamos from June 21 to June 26, 2000. The Master Plan was elaborated and finalized during the charrette through public comment and direct input. It was estimated that over 1000 people came by the charrette room or contacted us through the charrette web site, www.charrette.center.com/lad, during the five days. The final charrette presentation at Central Park Square attracted over 100 people.

It took another six weeks for the results of the charrette to be gathered and organized in the form of this Master plan for further dissemination and action.

"Above all else, a city is a means of providing a maximum number of social contacts and satisfactions. When the open spaces gape too widely, and the dispersal is too constant, the people lack a stage for their activities and the drama of their daily life lacks sharp focus."

- Lewis Mumford
(The Highway and the City)